

CLAIMS

1. A process for forming aggregates of hydrophobic group-containing polysaccharide in water, comprising causing the hydrophobic group-containing polysaccharide to swell in water and treating the resulting swollen dispersion by dispersing it using a homogenizer under a pressure of 9.8 - 490 MPa (100 - 5,000 kgf/cm²).

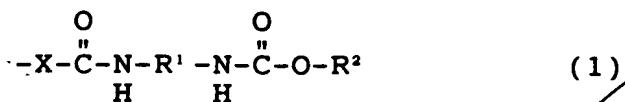
2. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the homogenizer is a high-pressure homogenizer.

3. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the homogenizer is a high-pressure homogenizer which operates so as to jet the swollen dispersion pressurized under a pressure of 9.8 - 490 MPa (100 - 5,000 kgf/cm²) into a chamber from an orifice to disperse the swollen dispersion to treat it.

4. The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the aggregates of the hydrophobic group-containing polysaccharide have particle sizes of 10 - 30 nm and numbers of associations of the hydrophobic group-containing polysaccharide molecules of 3 - 20.

5. The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the hydrophobic group-containing polysaccharide has -XH groups (wherein X denotes oxygen atom or a nitrogen-containing group represented by NY with Y standing for hydrogen atom or a hydrocarbon group of 1 - 10 carbon atoms), wherein 0.1 - 10 -XH groups per 100 monosaccharide units constituting the

polysaccharide are replaced by one or more hydrophobic groups represented by the formula (1), namely,



in which X is the same as given above, R¹ denotes a hydrocarbon group having 1 - 50 carbon atoms and R² denotes a hydrocarbon group having 12 - 50 carbon atoms or a steryl.

6. The process as claimed in claim 5, wherein the polysaccharide to be substituted by hydrophobic group(s) consists of any one selected from the group consisting of pullulan, amylopectin, amylose, dextran, hydroxyethyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl dextran, mannan, levan, inulin, chitin, chitosan, xyloglucan and water-soluble cellulose.

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